

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 169 040

SP 014 059

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TITLE Planning Tomorrow's Curriculum.
PUB DATE Oct 78
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Development; Creative Thinking; *Curriculum Development; *Curriculum Planning; Daily Living Skills; *Educational Objectives; *Futures (of Society); Learning Processes; *Relevance (Education); *Social Change

ABSTRACT

Curriculum planning for the future must recognize and accept certain premises: forces at work in society greatly influence the nature and direction of the curriculum; students in our society possess varied backgrounds, capabilities, interests, and aptitudes that must be met; common curriculum designs have many strengths; a curriculum to foster thinking and effective human relations is needed if education is to bring about change. Reasoning skills and independent learning should play an important part in tomorrow's curriculum, and more emphasis must be given to process than to memorization. Curriculum methodology thus becomes critical, and any method that will enable children to learn how to learn will be of great value. (DS)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND
USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

PLANNING TOMORROW'S CURRICULUM

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The passing months revealed a flourish of activities ranging from computerized banking to the training of women astronauts. Daily, the human mind is stimulated by astounding events. Children of this era are propelled by these events. It seems essential, therefore, to demand that curriculum developers be futurists in planning tomorrow's curriculum for pulsive children.

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To further emphasize the demand, future curriculum planners could consider time spent in life activities by primitive man, agricultural man, and industrial man (Best, 1973). Primitive Man had a life expectancy of 18 years. He spent seven and a half years in sleeping, half a year in eating, one year in miscellaneous activities, zero years in education, six years in working, and three years in creative and leisure time activity, including childhood play. Agricultural Man had a life expectancy of 35 years and he spent 13 years in sleeping, one year in eating, two years in miscellaneous activities, one year in education, ten years working, and eight years in creative and leisure time activity. Industrial Man, or Modern Man, has a life expectancy of 70 years and he spends 24 years sleeping, two and a quarter years in eating, five years in miscellaneous activities, four and a

quarter years in formal education, seven and a half years in working, and 27 years in creative and leisure time activity, including childhood play.

If today, Industrial Man demands more knowledge and more creative activity, how great will be Future Man's requirements? Moreover, how does the curriculum planner meet Future Man's needs when futurity is somewhat obscure, often uncertain and suppositional, and only allusive? Many of us have only limited perceptual abilities to deal with the futures phenomenon. However, with humility, we offer some tentative and provisional suggestions for approaching futures curriculum planning.

At the onset, each futures planner should spend time in meditation. You may ask where is the time, that scarce and precious commodity in these days of overlapping duties, cut-backs, and program alternatives. As impossible as it may be, meditation is the kernel of survival for highly accountable actions. Meditation, in the academic sense, means time each day or each week to close the office door, to think, to study, and to plan. The focus of our mental activity is on where we have been, where we are, and where we might go - futures. Rubin (1975) indicated that we study to classify the present and to predict needed redirection. We ponder the probable,

the possible, or the preferable futures. We forecast or anticipate redirections. Futures of many kinds become umbilicus in the planning. Meditation is germane to futures and should be one of the top priorities of the curriculum planner.

Futures is a set of images and assumptions; an architectural premise about things to come. In short, futures are successive and alternative organizational conceptions about what might be, each conception tentative and different from the next. Of the generated futures, many are worthy, some are reachable within our circumstances, and a few become our priorities. Futures are built on realities as contemplated, therefore, while we predict, we also see more clearly what is.

The reality is that the stability of the family declines while violent crimes increase. The reality is that the rapidly developing technology dominates making the natural world an artificial world created by man. Toffler (1970) says that we are fascinated by achievements of physical science and the rapid development of mechanical inventions, atomic weaponry, nuclear power, space exploration, and the multiplicity of electronics and computers.

We also see changes in emotional, moral, and spiritual values expressed in confused attitudes of both adults and youth approaching family, work, and education. While we say

children should learn to write, we question writing in the days of machines, dictaphones, and computers. While we say children should learn to read, we wonder whether Marshall McLuhan's idea of reliance upon visual and pictorial stimuli is sufficient. We see confused attitudes caused by the high divorce rate, the one parent families, the expanded families, the social fluidity and mobility, and the greater numbers of people demanding rights - all that they may be. No value judgments are placed on these trends but they are raised to create a network of influences upon today's educational scene. The real world of the school-aged child is exemplified by the composition presented to the teacher upon returning from a summer vacation:

My Summer Vacation
by Futura Pennypacker

I spent the early part of my summer in Rochester, New York, with my daddy while he switched jobs, the middle part of my summer in Reno with my mom while she switched husbands, and the last part of my summer in Denmark with my big brother while he switched sexes (Martin, 1975).

The realities point out the potential variations in lifestyles for youngsters. The hope for productive lifestyles is in futures-oriented curriculum planners. Planners do possess the potential to incorporate serviceable knowledge, attitudes,

and skills in curriculum through the open and creative use of the human mind. What will happen in the future will depend not solely on increasing knowledge and improving technology, but must include a meeting of the minds. The future curriculum must be, as Doyle (1976) defined it, "a blueprint for action which supposedly functions to integrate the independent efforts of a vast number of specialists". More simplistically stated, curriculum is a program of study which combines human and material resources for optimum learning.

When curriculum committees gather to construct futures-oriented curriculum, the group must recognize and accept implied premises. These are: that forces at work in society greatly influence the nature and direction of the curriculum; that the boys and girls of our society possess varied backgrounds, capabilities, interests, and aptitudes which must be met; that common curriculum designs have many strengths; and that a curriculum to foster thinking and effective human relations is needed if education is to bring about change.

The wise curriculum planner knows and recognizes that curriculum is the great resource for each child, the child as a person. Each child has his own pace and pattern of growth and development. Learning must be individualized so that the child is neither overplaced nor underplaced in materials and skills. While each child is different, he is like many of

his agemates in certain skills. Thus, it is wise to build into curriculum a firm foundation for sharing with those of similar developmental characteristics. Finally, the needs of the child for socialization must be met in the context of a group life. The futures-oriented curriculum incorporates one-to-one teaching, small group lessons, as well as total group experiences.

The child, at the very heart of the futures-oriented curriculum, must also be recognized in terms of his rights as a learner. This includes the right to learn what is most worth learning as determined by him and as introduced by his caretakers. Being a learner, the child has the right to be wanted at school for this affects how he will learn. A child has the right to expect that schools will persuade families and communities to participate in learning for that makes growing up a challenge, a satisfaction, and a shared experience. Each child also has the right to develop feelings of personal adequacy. Finally, the child has the right to discover love of self as a worthy attribute. Without it, there can be no genuine love of others. The poet Schiller wrote, "Self-discovery, faith, truth - through these we bring love into our lives, ourselves become lovable, and so reach out to forge with our fellow men the enduring bonds that preserve life."

The educator who would create a futures curriculum must understand why there is curriculum for children. Curriculum experiences - rich, varied, traditional, and new - make it possible for children to grow in understanding their futures, as well as their present. In essence, the two purposes of curriculum are: (1) to go straight to social problems of the day equipping each young person to help solve them and, hopefully, to take society to a new ground; and (2) to go straight to the full potentiality of each young person, helping him to grow as much as possible in his own person becoming.

Very specifically then, what must curriculum planners include in tomorrow's curriculum? Since the future means complexity and variety, students should be equipped with fundamental skills, with reasoning at the very core. Whatever was done in the past, holds merit in the future, if it is done well. Also, curriculum should be oriented toward independent learning. Students should have opportunities to assume responsibility for their learning. This means that greater demands must be made on good work habits so that students know how to make choices and how to budget time. They must know how to assign priorities to their assignments and which subjects require greater or lesser attention.

In the futures curriculum, more emphasis should be given to process rather than the memorization of facts. The use of

scientific inquiry and problem solving should be used to move from the known to the unknown. In this way, children feel comfortable with unresolved problems.

What we are in fact saying is that curriculum methodology is critical. Any method which will enable children to learn how to learn will be of great value. Therefore, added to reading, writing, and arithmetic, Toffler (1974) adds reasoning, to encourage logical thinking skills. Thus, students should be questioned to think of cause and effect, comparative analysis, alternative courses of action, consequences, judgments, and motives. Curriculum planners need to encourage young people to speculate freely and fancifully. Like in the song, children should be afforded opportunities to "Dream the Impossible Dream" for in this way their minds become expansive and able to create. Courses, unit, or lessons in Futures give students the time to systematically explore possibilities and probabilities. Thus, curriculum contains experiences of exploring and creating which enable children to increase in copy-ability - the speed and economy with which they relate to continual change. For if there is one area in which we have been remiss, it has been in helping children to store up alternatives for change.

The curriculum of the future needs strong emphasis on future-relevant behavior skills. There needs to be a

combination of factual content and universal training into the "life-know-how" approach. Young people are highly motivated by survival courses which challenge their minds and their energies. They love the ruggedness of relying on their resources. They crave "hands-on" types of learning. Such is reflected in their deep fascination with death and how the family must solve the problems of the burial. Also, they become animated when learning takes place in machine shops, in stores, in banks, in museums, and in the most legitimate settings. Books and paper-and-pencil lessons will not suffice to keep them interested and involved. In short, they want to learn how to learn in the most natural ways.

A word of caution about who helps the futures-oriented curriculum planner decide about new curriculum ideas. The textbook industry is a multi-million dollar business and book salesmen are in the business of selling. Planners cannot be too prone to listening to others who have less knowledge of children when they are designing curriculum. Research by Orlich, Roff and Hansen (1976) which was done with 301 elementary school principals in Washington State asked where principals learned about new programs. Their first and most frequently mentioned source was book publishers, with curriculum coordinators, professional journals, and conferences lagging far behind. It might be of far greater value to ask

curriculum professors in universities or curriculum specialists in state departments of education to be peers of curriculum planners at the local level. School faculties also see where there are needs and how they can be managed.

To recapitulate, curriculum planning for the future needs to incorporate a process approach to learning rather than a memorization approach. The process must contain some of the skills which Golubchick (1976) includes for teaching social studies. These skills are: action learning; simulations or games; inquiry method; values clarification; the use of multimedia; and independent study. The curriculum must teach the fundamental skills of READING, WRITING, and ARITHMETIC, adding to these Toffler's fourth skill of REASONING. The curriculum must stress still another "R" which is RELATING. For in the complex, fast-paced world of tomorrow, children will need to know how to relate to varied others, to adults, and to their environments. If we can succeed with the 5 Rs, learning will not cease at age 18, but like life, it will continue as long as life. For it is in the continuation of learning that the child-man is ever evolving and, therefore, is ever in the process of BECOMING.

As planners for tomorrow's curriculum, you may visualize yourselves somewhere between Max Rafferty, former superintendent of public instruction for the state of California, and anthropologist Margaret Mead. Max Rafferty (Hipple, 1974)

is not worried about change in the schools. He feels that education and curriculum have not changed much, nor will they change in the next 30 years. Rafferty compares education and curriculum to charting the course of an Alpine glacier during the same time. He sees them both as being "infinitely slow, completely predictable and very, very dull!" On the other hand, Margaret Mead (Toffler, 1974) presents a much more optimistic view. Mead says, "We must educate people in what nobody knew yesterday, and prepare people ... for what no one knows yet, but which some people must know tomorrow." Mead does not present an easy task. It is our challenge. It is our hope.

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